

Voter outreach led to big drop in rejected mail ballots

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY A
ssociated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic triggered an unprecedented surge in mailed ballots last year, raising concerns that a flood of first-time absentee voters would lead to another record: more ballots tossed out for missing deadlines, signatures or other reasons.

Those fears never materialized. An analysis by The Associated Press found that the rate of rejected ballots was actually lower in November than during last year's primaries in several politically pivotal states despite an increase in the number of absentee ballots cast.

In one of the most striking instances, Wisconsin saw

both a decline in rejection rate and the overall number of ballots tossed out. During the state's chaotic primary at the start of the pandemic, Wisconsin rejected roughly 23,000 absentee ballots compared with about 4,000 ballots in November even as the number of absentee ballots rose from just shy of 1.2 million in the primary to nearly 2 million.

Election officials and voting experts attribute the declines to extensive voter education campaigns; work by volunteers to help find voters and fix ballot issues; and myriad efforts to make absentee voting easier, including new ways for people to track their ballots.

Continued on next page



In this Nov. 6, 2020, file photo, Christin Clatterbuck leaves an affidavit and information about fixing absentee ballots on the door of a home in Stone Mountain, Ga.

Associated Press

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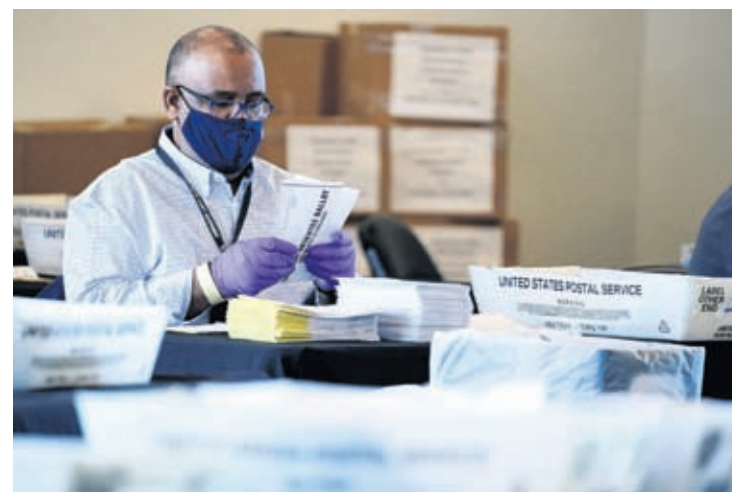
Locations: The Cove Mall (8AM-10PM) and Medcare at the Mill Resort (8:30AM-12:30PM).

Continued from Front

Concerns about U.S. Postal Service delays also played a role, motivating voters to return ballots early or take advantage of a fleet of drop boxes that were deployed for the election. Despite this success, Republican lawmakers in several states have invoked former President Donald Trump's unfounded claims of election fraud to propose strict limits on absentee voting. For instance,

a GOP push in Georgia would eliminate no-excuse absentee voting, requiring people to give a reason. In the weeks following the election, Trump seized on preliminary reports of lower rejection rates in Georgia and Pennsylvania — states he lost. But the AP analysis shows November rejection rates also declined in Florida, North Carolina and Ohio — states Trump won. Ohio's rejection rate declined from 1.35% in the

primary to just 0.42% in November. The state's chief election official, a Republican, credited more user-friendly voting materials and requirements that local election officials call and email voters about ballot problems, rather than just notifying them by mail. Absentee ballots represented 36% of all votes cast. "All of those things that we did helped to reduce the error rate," said Secretary of State Frank LaRose. "And



In this Nov. 4, 2020, file photo, an election inspector looks at an absentee ballot as vote counting in the general election continues at State Farm Arena in Atlanta.

Associated Press

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that's a really big success story — that we had massive absentee voting and a tiny number of errors."

Election officials and voting experts pay close attention to ballot rejection data because it represents, in most cases, people who were unable to vote successfully. Newly registered, Black, Hispanic and younger voters have had their ballots rejected at higher rates than white and more experienced voters, according to research by University of Florida political scientist Daniel A. Smith.

For its analysis, the AP sought 2020 ballot data from swing states: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. In nine, it found the mailed ballot rejection rate declined. Pennsylvania said data was not yet available, and Arizona noted its numbers were preliminary. Of the states, Colorado sends mail ballots to all registered voters and about 75% of Arizona voters are on a permanent early voting list and automatically receive ballots in the mail.

"It's not that something bad didn't happen when we worried something bad would happen. It's that we did all this hard work to stop

the bad thing from happening," said Sylvia Albert with Common Cause, one of several groups assisting voters who encountered problems with mail ballots. In a few states, election officials implemented extensive ballot-tracking and notification systems while various organizations mobilized volunteers to track down and help voters whose ballots were flagged for rejection. North Carolina and Georgia were among the states where groups made a concerted effort to reduce rejections.

"There is nothing more sad than a person taking these steps to be involved in the process and then being disenfranchised through no fault of their own," said Saira Draper, voter protection director for the Democratic Party of Georgia.

For the presidential election, a joint effort by state Democrats and the Biden-Harris campaign involving thousands of volunteers knocking on doors and working phones reached nearly 16,000 people who ultimately fixed their ballots, Draper said.

In Florida, nearly 73% of voters whose ballots were initially flagged for rejection successfully fixed their ballots, according to a new analysis by Smith. □

Schools weigh whether to seat students closer together

By COLLIN BINKLEY
AP Education Writer

BOSTON (AP) — New evidence that it may be safe for schools to seat students 3 feet apart — half of the previous recommended distance — could offer a way to return more of the nation's children to classrooms with limited space. Even as more teachers receive vaccinations against COVID-19, social distancing guidelines have remained a major hurdle for districts across the U.S. Debate around the issue flared last week when a study suggested that masked students can be seated as close as 3 feet apart with no increased risk to them or teachers.

Published in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, the research looked at schools in Massachusetts, which has backed the 3-foot guideline for months. Illinois and Indiana are also allowing 3 feet of distance, and other states such as Oregon are considering doing the same.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is now exploring the idea too. The agency's director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, said the 6-foot guideline is "among the biggest challenges" schools have faced in reopening.

The CDC included the larger spacing in its latest school guidelines, which were issued in February and concluded that schools can safely operate during the pandemic with masks, distancing and other precautions. It suggested 6 feet and said physical distancing "should be maximized to the greatest extent possible."

Other organizations have issued more relaxed guidelines, including the World Health Organization, which urges 1 meter in schools. The American Academy of Pediatrics says to space desks "3 feet apart and ideally 6 feet apart."

Dan Domenech, executive director of AASA, a national superintendents group, said he expects more states and schools to move to the 3-foot rule in com-



In this March 2, 2021, file photo, socially distanced, and with protective partitions, students work on an art project during class at the Sinaloa Middle School in Novato, Calif.

Associated Press

ing weeks. With the larger guideline, he said, most schools only have space to bring back half of their students at a time. Moving to 3 feet could allow about 75% at a time, he said.

"There are districts that have been doing 3 feet for quite some time without experiencing any greater amount of infection," he said.

In Illinois, health officials said last week that students can be seated 3 feet apart as long as their teachers are vaccinated. Before, state officials required 6 feet.

With the state's blessing, the Barrington district near Chicago reopened middle schools Tuesday using the smaller spacing rule. Any student will be allowed to attend in-person classes, although the district expects roughly 30% to continue with remote learning. Questions around spacing have led to a battle in Massachusetts, where teachers and some schools oppose a state plan to bring younger students back five days a week starting next month. The plan calls on schools to seat students 3 feet apart, although many have been using 6 feet as

a standard. Districts that fail to meet the reopening deadline would risk losing state funding.

The Massachusetts Teachers Association, a statewide union, argues that seating students closer will increase the risk for everyone in the classroom. It also poses a problem for districts that have agreed to contracts with teachers adopting the 6-foot rule as a requirement.

"They can't just throw 6 feet out the window. They can't throw away what has been agreed upon," said Merrie Najimy, president of the union. "If they can't make it work, then they're going to have to come to a new agreement."

Public schools in Worcester are among those pushing back against the closer spacing.

Tracy O'Connell Novick, a member of the district

school committee, said switching to the 3-foot standard would be "betting the health" of thousands of students and staff.

In Boston's public schools, desks will be spaced at least 3 feet apart, but teachers and staff will be asked to keep 6 feet from students and other staff when feasible, district spokesperson Xavier Andrews said. Schools will also use larger rooms and outdoor spaces to keep students at a safe distance, he said.

In some states that already allow 3-foot spacing, schools say they have seen no evidence of increased risk. School officials in Danville, Indiana, which moved to 3 feet in October, said students have been in the classroom all year with no uptick in virus transmission.

"It's gone very well for us. I won't say there has been no transmission, but it's

been staggeringly low — like one time or something like that," said Tim McRoberts, vice president of the school board. "We've kept our doors open. We've had no temporary shutdowns."

In Ohio, Cincinnati's school board got an earful from parents and others last month when it proposed resuming in-person learning at the crowded Walnut Hills High School under a model that called for distancing of only 3 feet there while its other schools would use 6 feet.

The critics included Walnut Hills teacher Brandon Keller, who said the plan was dangerous. He warned the board that their decision "will have a body count."

Board members backed off on reopening that school, then weeks later narrowly voted for a plan that included a phased reopening, but they also warned that the physical distancing might be less than 6 feet. Students also have options to continue learning virtually.

Seven superintendents in central Oregon sent a letter to Gov. Kate Brown last week asking the state to relax some of its social distancing rules — including the 6-foot barrier — so that more students can return to class full time.

Oregon's Crook County School District, which has had students in classrooms most of the school year, has found that masks, contact tracing and sending students home when they show symptoms are the most effective means of combating the virus.

"The 6-feet rule doesn't make as much sense as the other safety measures," district spokesperson Jason Carr said. "What may have made sense two months ago or at the beginning of the year might not now." □



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Michelle Obama aims to give a million meals in new campaign

By **HALELUYA HADERO**
AP Business Writer

Michelle Obama is launching a nonprofit campaign that aims to provide more than 1 million meals to food-insecure families in connection with the debut Tuesday of her children's food show on Netflix.

The "Pass the Love w/ Waffles + Mochi" initiative, named after the new series "Waffles + Mochi," is a collaborative campaign by the nonprofit Partnership for a Healthier America, its honorary chair Obama and Higher Ground Productions, the production company owned by the former first lady and her husband, former President Barack Obama.

The nonprofit says the campaign was inspired by the series, which tells the story of two puppet friends who "travel the world exploring the wonders of food and culture while learning how to cook with fresh ingredients."

Walmart and Blue Apron have jumped in to support the initiative, which also aims to "leverage the show, its characters, and Mrs.



In this May 11, 2019, file photo, former first lady Michelle Obama speaks during an appearance in Atlanta.

Associated Press

Obama to meaningfully shift our food culture toward more affordable, fun, at-home meals for families of every income level," according to the nonprofit.

PHA President and CEO

Nancy Roman told The Associated Press that the two companies will contribute funds to the campaign and raise money for it among their customers. More than half the money is expected

to come from the public, Roman says.

The nonprofit was created in conjunction with Michelle Obama's Let's Move! effort in 2010. The former first lady, who has long been a

champion of healthy eating, said in the announcement last week that the idea is to "help make sure families all over the country can access fresh, nutritious food" amid the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The U.S. has seen a significant rise in hunger during the virus outbreak. One estimate from the organization Feeding America says around 45 million Americans in 2020 may have experienced food insecurity — limited or uncertain access to adequate food — compared with 35 million in 2019.

Caitlin Caspi, a University of Connecticut professor who studies food insecurity, says the rise in unemployment, the closure of schools and disruptions across food systems — like shortages of staple foods in the early days of the pandemic — all played a factor in the increase. And many, left with little options, turned to food banks for help. The issue has been "most pronounced among households with children, and in particular, households with children of color," Caspi said. □

Rescuers save 2 from pickup dangling over deep Idaho gorge



This image provided by the Idaho State Police shows the scene where authorities say a set of camp trailer safety chains and quick, careful work by emergency crews saved two people after their pickup truck plunged off a bridge, leaving them dangling above a deep gorge in southern Idaho on Monday, March 15, 2021.

Associated Press

By **REBECCA BOONE**

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Authorities say a set of camp trailer safety chains and

quick, careful work by emergency crews saved two people after their pickup truck plunged off a

bridge, leaving them dangling above a deep gorge in southern Idaho.

Idaho State Police responded to the accident at about 2:45 p.m. Monday, said ISP spokeswoman Lynn Hightower. A trooper found a man and a woman inside the pickup truck that was dangling, nose-down, off the side of the bridge spanning the Malad Gorge. The gorge is narrow but is roughly 100 feet (30.48 meters) deep below the bridge, roughly the height of a 10-story building. The gorge reaches about 250 feet (76.20 meters) deep at its deepest point.

The only thing keeping the 2004 Ford F-350 pickup from falling was the set of "safety chains" attaching the 30-foot camper trailer, which remained on the bridge, to the pickup. A state trooper and local sheriff's deputy first used an additional set

of chains from a nearby semi-truck to help support the dangling pickup truck, holding it in place until additional rescuers with cranes, rope rescue gear and other equipment could arrive.

Emergency crews were then able to rappel down to the hanging truck and attach a harness to each occupant, allowing them to be safely carried back to the bridge. Both were taken to hospitals, and neither appeared to have life-threatening injuries, Hightower said. Two small dogs inside the pickup were also safely rescued, and taken to the home of a nearby family member.

Workers were still attempting to pull the pickup from the precipice Monday evening.

"It was terrifying," Hightower said. "It was definitely a heroic rescue from everybody

that was out there, and thankfully, they're all fine." Witnesses said the truck appeared to lose control before the crash, first swerving to hit the right shoulder barrier before sliding over the left-side guardrail. The truck then tipped over the bridge, with the camper blocking both lanes of the bridge.

The case remains under investigation, Hightower said. Agencies from Gooding, Jerome and Twin Falls responded to the incident, along with regional sheriff's offices and fire department and paramedic services.

"A rescue like this takes a lot of quick thinking and action but this is what they train for," she said. "That training just paid off today, and two people are alive because of the hours and hours of training that these emergency responders do." □

Russia threatens to block Twitter in a month

By DARIA LITVINOVA

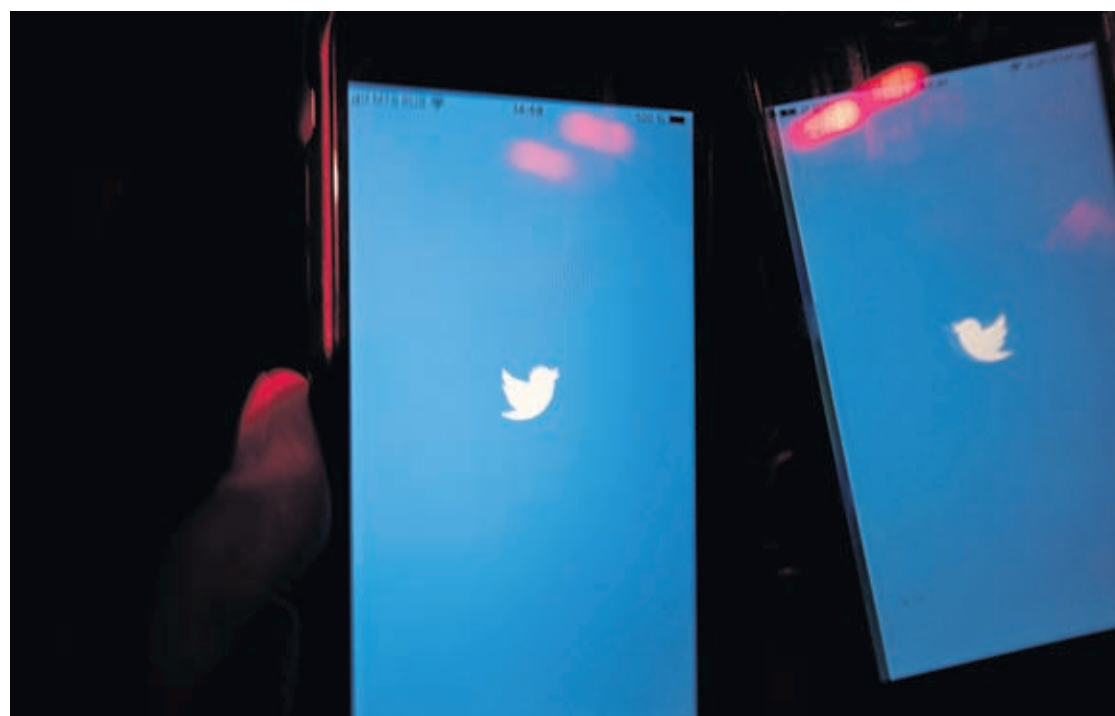
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian authorities said Tuesday they would block Twitter in a month if it doesn't take steps to remove banned content, a move that escalates the Russian government's drawn-out standoff with social media platforms that have played a major role in amplifying dissent in Russia.

Russia's state communications watchdog, Roskomnadzor, last week announced it was slowing down the speed of uploading photos and videos to Twitter over its alleged failure to remove content encouraging suicide among children and information about drugs and child pornography.

The agency said Twitter has failed to remove more than 3,000 posts with banned content, including more than 2,500 posts encouraging suicide among minors. The platform responded by emphasizing its policy of zero tolerance for child sexual exploitation, promotion of suicide and drug sales.

On Tuesday, deputy chief of Roskomnadzor Vadim Subbotin argued that Twitter



In this Wednesday, March 10, 2021 file photo, a mobile phone user turns on the Twitter application on his smartphone in Moscow, Russia.

Associated Press

ter still wasn't complying with the demands of the Russian authorities. "Twitter doesn't react to our requests appropriately, and if things go on like this, then in a month it will be blocked, on an out-of-court basis," Subbotin told the Interfax news agency. He added that Roskomnadzor at this point "is not registering specific steps by Twitter to remove prohibited content." Twitter did not respond im-

mediately to an email request for comment.

Authorities have criticized social media platforms that have been used to bring tens of thousands of people into the streets across Russia this year to demand the release of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. The wave of demonstrations was the largest in years and posed a major challenge to the Kremlin.

The authorities alleged so-

cial media platforms failed to remove calls for children to join the protests. Russian President Vladimir Putin has urged police to act more to monitor social platforms and to track down those who "draw the children into illegal and unsanctioned street actions."

The government's efforts to tighten control of the internet and social media date back to 2012, when a law allowing authorities

to blacklist and block certain online content was adopted. Since then, a growing number of restrictions targeting messaging apps, websites and social media platforms have been introduced.

In 2014, authorities adopted a law requiring online services to store the personal data of Russian users on servers in Russia and have since tried to make Facebook and Twitter comply with it. Both companies have been repeatedly fined, first small amounts of around \$50 and last year the equivalent of \$63,000 each, for not complying.

The government has repeatedly aired threats to block the two social media giants, but stopped short of outright bans even though the law allows it, probably fearing the move would elicit too much public outrage. Only the social network LinkedIn, which wasn't very popular in Russia, has been banned by the authorities for the failure to store user data in Russia.

However, some experts have said that the authorities might be seriously considering the possibility of bans this time around. □

Ethiopia rejects outside mediation in Nile River dam dispute

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA

Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP)

— An Ethiopian official said on Tuesday that his government opposes calls by Sudan for outside

mediators including the United States in the ongoing dispute over Ethiopia's construction of a massive hydroelectric dam on the Nile River.

Ethiopia is generally op-

posed to mediation by outside parties even though the African Union is welcome to help, Dina Mufi, spokesman for Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told reporters.

"The tripartite talks between Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam should be concluded between the three countries themselves, not through mediators," he said. "The role of mediators is facilitating the talks, not spoon-feeding the process."

Mufi added that Ethiopia has "big respect for the African Union" and that the country "believes in resolving African problems by Africans."

The Sudan Tribune reported on Monday that Sudan

had formally requested mediation by the European Union, the United States, and the African Union to resolve the dispute after the visit of Sudan's prime minister to Cairo last week. Despite negotiations that have lasted years, Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia have failed to reach a deal over how to share the Nile's water, a lifeline for all three countries. The talks with a variety of mediators, including the Trump administration, have failed to produce a resolution.

Ethiopia began filling the dam's reservoir last July as heavy rains flooded the river. The \$4.6 billion dam will be Africa's largest. It is expected to reach full power generating capacity in 2023, according to the government.

Ethiopia insists the dam is a crucial development that will help pull millions of its nearly 110 million citizens out of poverty and become a major power exporter. Downstream Egypt, which depends on the Nile to supply fresh water to its farmers and population of 100 million, asserts that the dam poses an existential threat. It has said that Ethiopia is filling the dam too quickly. Sudan has also voiced concern over its access to the Nile's water. Negotiators have said key questions remain about how much water Ethiopia will release downstream if a multi-year drought occurs and how the countries will resolve any future disputes. Ethiopia rejects binding arbitration at the final stage. □



In this April 12, 2015 file photo, Sayed Ahmed Abdoh poles his boat to check his fish traps in the Nile River, near Abu al-Nasr village, about 770 kilometers (480 miles) south of Cairo, in Egypt.

Associated Press

Baby bottle craze sweeps Gulf Arab states, sparks backlash

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Cafes across several Gulf Arab states started selling coffee and other cold drinks in baby bottles this month, kicking off a new trend that has elicited excitement, confusion — and backlash.

The fad began at Einstein Cafe, a slick dessert chain with branches across the region, from Dubai to Kuwait to Bahrain. Instead of ordinary paper cups, the cafe, inspired by pictures of trendy-looking bottles shared on social media, decided to serve its thick milky drinks in plastic baby bottles.

Although the franchise was no newcomer to baby-themed products — a milkshake with cerelac, the rice cereal for infants, is a long-standing bestseller — the unprecedented fervor over the feeding bottles came as a bit of a shock. All the stress and anxiety over the coronavirus pandemic appears to have spurred some to find an outlet in the strange new craze.

"Everyone wanted to buy it, people called all day, telling us they're coming



A waiter poses with a tray of baby bottles that he brought out from storage, at Einstein Cafe in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, March 14, 2021.

Associated Press

with their friends, they're coming with their father and mother," Younes Molla, CEO of the Einstein franchise in the United Arab Emirates, told The Associated Press this week. "After so many months with the pandemic, with all the difficul-

ties, people took photos, they had fun, they remembered their childhood." Lines clogged Einstein stores across the Gulf. People of all ages streamed onto sidewalks, waiting for their chance to suck coffee and juice from a plastic

bottle. Some patrons even brought their own baby bottles to other cafes, pleading with bewildered baristas to fill them up. Pictures of baby bottles filled with colorful kaleidoscopes of drinks drew thousands of likes on Instagram

and ricocheted across the popular social media app TikTok. A cure for the world's uncertainty? A response to some primal instinct? Either way, a trend was born.

Soon, however, online haters took note — the baby bottle drinkers and providers faced a barrage of nasty comments.

"People were so angry, they said horrible things, that we were an 'aeb,' to Islam and the Muslim culture," said Molla, using the Arabic term for shame or dishonor.

Last week, the anger reached the highest levels of government. Dubai authorities cracked down. Inspection teams burst into cafes where the trend had taken off and handed out fines.

"Such indiscriminate use of baby bottles is not only against local culture and traditions," read the government statement, "but the mishandling of the bottle during the filling could also contribute to the spread of COVID-19," an apparent reference to those bringing their used bottles to other cafes. □

'We are hungry': Lebanese protest worsening economic crisis

BEIRUT (AP) — Outraged protesters returned to the streets of Lebanon's capital Tuesday, blocking roads with burning tires and garbage containers as the currency continued to plummet to all-time lows and the country's financial crisis intensified.

The protests resumed — al-

though in smaller numbers — following several days of relative calm as the Lebanese pound continued its slide, plunging to a new low of 15,000 to the U.S. dollar on the black market. "Where are the people? Come down, we are hungry, we are fed up!" yelled Ahmad Shuman, a protest-

er frustrated at the small number of people taking part in demonstrations. In another Beirut neighborhood, small groups of young men, some driving scooters, pelted shop windows with stones and asked them to close. It was not clear why they were pressuring them to close. The currency has lost 90% of its value since October 2019, when anti-government protests erupted, including more than 25% in the past few weeks alone. Senior politicians, meanwhile, have refused to work together to form a new government that would implement the reforms needed to extract the nation from the crisis. The currency crash has pushed more than half the population into poverty as prices soar. It has also depleted foreign reserves,

raising concerns that Lebanon's central bank will end subsidies of some basic commodities, including fuel in coming weeks.

The crisis is posing the gravest threat to Lebanon's stability since the 1975-90 civil war. France's foreign minister warned last week that Lebanon is running out of time before total collapse, putting the blame squarely on the country's leaders whose refusal to come together to form a government has exacerbated the crisis.

U.S. State Department deputy spokeswoman Jalina Porter, speaking to reporters in Washington on Monday, said the U.S. is concerned about developments in Lebanon and the apparent inaction of the country's leadership in the face of multiple ongoing crises.

"Lebanon's political leaders need to put aside their partisan brinkmanship and form a government that will quickly implement critical and long-needed reforms, restore investor confidence, and rescue the country's economy," she said.

Lebanon's government resigned in August following a massive explosion at Beirut's port that killed 211 people, wounded more than 6,000 and damaged entire neighborhoods in the capital.

Disagreements between President Michel Aoun, who is an ally of the militant group Hezbollah, and Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri, who is opposed to the group, have so far delayed the formation of a Cabinet. Hariri was chosen for the post in October. □



A Syrian boy who sells flowers on the street watches protesters burn tires to block a main road during a protest against the increase in prices of consumer goods and the crash of the local currency, in Beirut, Lebanon, Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Associated Press

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The Flag of Aruba

ORANJESTAD — It all started with a painting contest on January 21st, 1976, where the competition consisted of a design for a flag. A total of 693 designs were received. Among the designs what stood out the most were the symbols of the cross and the horizontal stripes. Also the colors more used were red, blue and yellow. Flag Research Institute in Boston, choose the winning design.

The colors chosen were from the 'British Colour Council Dictionary of Colour Standards'. The design consists of a field of light blue (called Larkspur), two narrow parallel horizontal yellow (Bunting Yellow) stripes in the bottom half, and a four-pointed white-fabricated red (Union Flag red) star in the canton.

The Parliament of Aruba approved the design of the flag on March 16th, 1976, which was officially inaugurated on March 18th, 1976. For the first time on that day the flag was raised and the national anthem of Aruba 'Aruba Dushi Tera' was played. This took place at Wilhelmina Stadium in Dakota. .

The four colors and symbols

Light Blue represents the sea that's surrounding the island of Aruba.

Yellow is the color of abundance and the horizontal lines represent abundance of solidarity. They also represent Aruba's economy past and present. Aruba's main income in the past consisted of gold and aloë vera. The main income today is tourism. Yellow also stands for the local flora that blossom yellow flowers like: "Kibrahacha" Tabebuia billbergii, "Palo di Brazil" Haematoxylon brasiletto, "Bonchi di Strena" Parkinsonia aculeata, "Curahout" Peltophorum acutifolium, "Tuturutu" Yellow Dwarf Poincianas, Caesalpinia pulcherrima and "Wanglo" Puncture vine Tribulus cistoides. The horizontal yellow stripes symbolizes Aruba's freedom and separate status within the Kingdom of the Netherlands since January 1st, 1986.

White stands for peace and also symbolizes the purity of the hearts of Aruban people who strive for justice, order and liberty.

The red star represents the four points of the compass and symbolizes the different origins of the Aruban population that attracted people from all over the world. It also stands for Aruba itself surrounded by the beautiful blue sea and ancient industry of "Palo di Brazil" Haematoxylon brasiletto. Red signifies love and also as a homage for the indigenous Arubans, that died at Frenchman's pass during a confrontation with the French for the liberty of the island. Red is the Union Jack Red. □

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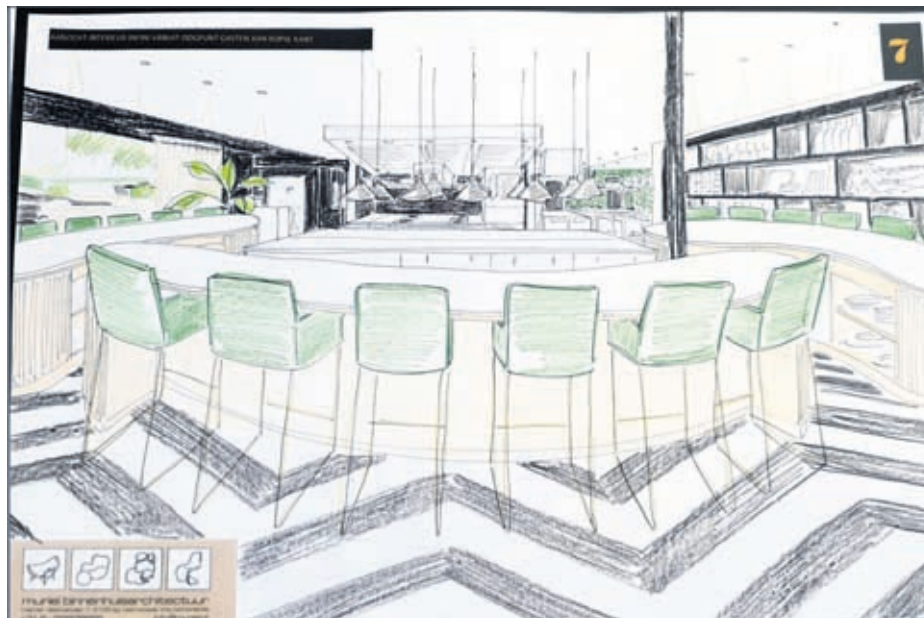
New beginnings after the kitchen table and beyond with new restaurant: Infini by Chef Urvin Croes

PALM BEACH — After spearheading The Kitchen Table for five years, receiving notable recognitions in USA Today, The Daily Meal and earning the #1 spot on Tripadvisor's list of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Caribbean, Chef Urvin Croes has now moved on to higher heights. Infini, his new chef's table, which opened at the Blue Residences in November 2020, allows the Michelin-trained Aruban culinary artist to create gastronomic experiences unconfined by cultural or regional expectations. The former The Kitchen Table space has since been renovated into a suitable culinary studio to host this vision. In describing these changes, Croes says: "We opened up the entire kitchen and elevated the dining tables so guests have a front row stadium-like view of each step of the preparations. The spotlights, which we carefully choreograph, follow the plates' transition from blank canvas into culinary works of art."

"It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create."

He had been sitting on the first menu for over a year. Inspired by umami, one of the five basic tastes, and also Japanese for "essence of deliciousness", Chef Croes strived to organically produce this palate in each dish of the eight-course Chef's Impression. "It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create. Take our popular langoustine for example; we combined elements that are rarely paired together: the bitter, sour and salty flavors of the lemon cream, kombucha, green grapes, watercress and achiote, fused with the sweet and delicate taste of the langoustine induce ultimate umami."

After hosting the first menu for three months, the Executive Chef introduced a second tour de force in February 2021 — this time a pes-



catarian menu dedicated to Lent, of which Croes has to say: "I wanted to focus on the finest fish in the world, they are the protagonists of this season." Visitors can experience the second Chef's Impression until May 2021, at which point Croes and his team will reveal exciting new flavors for the summer.

"Without a great team, there is no great chef"

"There is very little I can do by myself. Without a great team, there is no great chef", says Croes, while raving about the six young professionals sharing his kitchen. All graduates of Aruba's EPI College and familiar faces to the Chef as each one has completed their culinary internship under his guidance. In fact, Infini's Chef de Cuisine, Ashwin Maduro, was Urvin's very first student, before relocating to Amsterdam, where he worked at several Michelin-starred restaurants, including &moshik (formally &Samhoud Places). Having recently re-



turned to Aruba, Chef Maduro is thrilled to be reunited with his first mentor and hopes to secure Aruba's space on the global map of unique culinary experiences. Similarly, after four years working in the two-Michelin starred restaurant Spectrum, Chef de Partie Moises Ramirez returned home to share his vast experience in formulating recipes with meticulous attention to detail and consistency. Further down the kitchen line, Chef de Partie Alvaro Yi, who has worked at the two-Michelin starred FG Restaurant, is all about expressing himself through cooking and plating to create art that you can eat. Mixologist Marc-Anthony Rannis brings eight years of experience in the fine dining industry to Infini. His fine craftsmanship is displayed in the unparalleled wine pairings and signature cocktails, which include his personally homemade syrups, garnishes and fresh local ingredients. Maître D' and Junior Sommelier Jessica Theysen, who previously



managed renowned Chef Dennis Huwaë's Restaurant Daalder in Amsterdam, is a true storyteller. From the moment she serves the Salinity welcome drink and the culinary tale begins, she takes you on an adventure around the world to discover never-before-tasted combinations. Then, towards the end of the night, it is his time to shine — Pastry Chef Jean-Claude Werleman, that is. After spending the last two years perfecting his recipes in the Pastry Department of the Ritz Carlton Aruba, Werleman joins Infini to continue exploring his passion for experimenting with colors and bold flavors.

"It's time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own"

"The goal is to leave our visitors speechless. The look on their faces whenever they take the first bite says it all and it is priceless", shares Croes, with a smile. Reclaiming the spot of number one restaurant in the Caribbean is also in sight, but this time he will not stop there. "In the end, we want Aruba to be recognized for its culinary mastery. We have trained the best culinary artists right here on the island and they have proven themselves internationally in the most renowned kitchens in the world. Now it is time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own. Who knows where that will take us; hopefully to infinity and beyond."

Infini located at Blue Residences currently serves an eight-course Chef's Impression to up to 21 guests starting at 6:30PM. To make reservations visit www.infiniaruba.com or call +297-699-3982. □



infini
by Urvin Croes



History of fishing in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Fishing has been a family tradition for ages in Aruba. Our ancestors used to fish for a living. Even though nowadays you don't see them often we still have some passionate fishermen on the island that go out every day in search for fish to feed their families and serve our local market. One of these fisherman is Gregory Wernet.

The so-called Continental Bank between Aruba and the opposite coast reaches a depth of about 650 feet. The sea is very rich in fish here. Since the time of the indigenous native people fish and other sea creatures such as turtles, octopus squids, conch and many type of crustaceans have formed a means of subsistence for the native Aruban inhabitants. Especially along the west coast of the island where the fishing grounds are settlements of fishermen. Until the arrival of the oil industry Aruban fishermen could supply Aruba's wants.

As a source of income, however, fishing did not amount too much. In the beginning of the 1900's approximately 160 people earn their living in this branch of this industry. Rancho, which stands for a shed, nowadays east Oranjestad, was the head quarter and remains the fishermen's settlement. Savaneta, Noord, Santa Cruz all had their fishermen's villages. At a rough estimate there were about a hundred small fishing boats during that time.

The Arubans were mainly engaged in coastal fishing, using rowing-boats or small sailing-boats, and lines or dragnets and canisters in shallow water. When fishing with deep-sea lines just over the bottom of the sea the boat is kept in place by means of a piece of rock serving as an anchor. The two most important species of fish by far caught in this manner are the pargo or red snappers and a variety of groupers like the mero, jeanpao and the wowo di



boyo.

Cruising off the coast the Aruban fisherman patiently waits for a fish willing to snap at the bait on the drag-line, in nets and traps. Veritable giants are sometimes caught. Barracudas weigh from 9 to 44 pounds and measure from 3 to almost 7 feet. The king-fish has a weight from 22 to 44 pounds; the moclat may tip the scales at 155, whilst garfish, having a length of nine feet, weigh over 132 pounds.

Most fish caught is used for their own consumption, to feed their families and some are being sold in the



market to local restaurants.

Fisherman Gregory Wernet

Gregory Wernet is a well-known fisherman from Santa Cruz. His father taught him fishing when he was a small child. Gregory has two sons, Jordan and Jordanny, which he taught fishing too, when they were only 3 years old and he takes them fishing with him. Fishing has been a family tradition for quite a long time and even his grandson Willvion of 7 years old

is following his grandfather steps. This is the sixth generation of fishermen in their family.

They go deep sea fishing. There they catch red snapper, grouper and amberjack. They usually fish for 15 hours a day, but now due to the covid-19 measurements they go fishing from 5 in the morning until 8 o'clock at night or even sometimes from 8 at night till 5 in the morning. The day before they prepare all their fishing tools such as

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the Lines, lures, spears, and load their boat with fishing reels, batteries, fill the gasoline tank, lights and some food and beverages. For bait he uses sardines, squid and the small fish known in Aruba as piskechi. The have two boats they use for fishing. 'Virgen del Valle' which is parked at the pier by the Seaport and 'Padrot' which they have at home.

The fish they catch they take home to their families and they also sell it to their clients. Gregory is proud to be a fisherman. It is a honest and humble job but with it he is able to feed his family even during hard times. It is a very dangerous job and you have to spend many hours on the sea, waiting patiently and risking your life while fighting a big fish and big waves but the adrenaline it brings with it but also just sitting there listening to the sound of the waves and enjoying the marvelous view that nature has to offer is all worth it. □





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Aruba's National Anthem : 'ARUBA DUSHI TERA'

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ORANJESTAD — In the years 1975 and 1976, the government wanted to give Aruba it's own national anthem and flag, since these two are the symbols that identify of each country. The flag and anthem are symbols of love and patriotism. It was Gilberto François "Betico" Croes who made this special request.

'Aruba Dushi Tera' is the name of our national anthem. The history of this song started in 1951. It was a composition of two very well-known musicians, Rufo Wever and Juan Chabaya "Padu" Lampe. They felt the urge to compose a song that would express the love of our people for our island and the feeling of patriotism of each person.

Together with 'De Trupialen' group and under the guidance of Frère Alexius they managed to put this song in their repertoire with the purpose of making it popular. The song became very popular in a short time. In 1954, they even recorded the song on a long play disc. The song was played during every official ceremony of Aruba.

In the 70's installed a comisión consisting of Maybeline Arends-Croes, Rufo Odor, Padu Lampe, Eddy Bennet, Hubert "Lio" Booi y Rufo Wever to see if they could proclaim 'Aruba Dushi tera' as the national anthem. The committee unanimously recommended this to be played on the air waves. By that time, a third verse had been added which stated the cordiality and the love of freedom for our island.

On March 16th, 1976, the island council approved 'Aruba Dushi Tera' as the Aruba's national anthem, and on March 18th, 1976, during an official ceremony at the Wilhelmina Stadium in Dakota, the flag was raised for the first time while 'Aruba Dushi Tera' resonated for the first time as the national anthem of Aruba. The presentation was under the guidance of Maybeline Arends-Croes, together with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Aruba directed by Joy Kock.

Lyrics of "Aruba Dushi Tera":

1. Aruba patria aprecia,
nos cuna venera,
chikito y simpel bo por ta
pero si respeta.

Refrain: O, Aruba, Dushi tera,
nos baranca tan stima
nos amor pa bo t' asina grandi
cu n'tin nada pa kibre!

2. Bo playanan tan admira
cu palma tur dorna,
bo escudo y bandera ta
orguyo di nos tur!

Refrain: O, Aruba, Dushi tera, etc.
nos baranca tan stima.
nos amor pa bo t' asina grandi
cu n'tin nada pa kibr'e!

3. Grandesa di bo pueblo ta
su gran cordialidad,
cu Dios por guia y conserva
su amor pa libertad!

Refrain: O, Aruba, dushi tera,
nos baranca tan stima.
Nos amor pa bo t' asina grandi
cu n'tin nada pa kibr'e!
cu n'tin nada pa kibr'e!



Why good news for the economy can be a drag on your 401(k)

By **STAN CHOE**

NEW YORK (AP) — A huge shift is underway within the stock market, one that might roil your 401(k) in the short term, but one that many professional investors also see leading to longer-lasting gains.

A surge of optimism that the pandemic is on the way out has convinced investors to revamp their playbooks for where to put money. Most stocks across the market are rising, with the biggest gains coming from companies that would benefit most from a healthier economy, such as airlines and banks, after they got pounded lower for much of the pandemic.

But all the hope at the same time is forcing a climb in bond yields, which in turn is sending a group of tech stocks back to earth after they carried the market for much of the pandemic. When bonds pay more in interest, investors are less willing to pay as high prices for stocks seen as the most expensive or to wait as long for their big growth forecasts to come to fruition. Because of the way stock indexes are calculated, any weakness for the biggest stocks can mask strength that's sweeping across the rest of the market. It's why the S&P 500 is up less than 6% so far this



Pedestrians pass the New York Stock Exchange, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021, in New York.

Associated Press

year: Energy stocks have soared more than 38% and financial stocks have stormed about 17% higher, but tech stocks, which account for more than one-quarter of the index's market value, rose less than 2%. All that churning underneath the surface may sound inside baseball, but it has a big impact when 401(k) accounts are tied more than ever to the performance of the S&P 500 and other indexes. More than half the dollars in U.S. stock funds are directly mimicking indexes, according to Morningstar.

In other words, your 401(k) could fall even if the economy — and the majority of stocks in the market — are rising. It's the mirror-image of what happened early in the pandemic, when the S&P 500 powered higher even though the economy was falling into a terrifying pit. And professional investors say this rotation among sectors still has room to run. "It brings me back to business school, where we learned about how all the indices are different," said Lamar Villere, a portfolio manager at Villere & Co. in New Orleans. "It seems

so boring and academic, but there is not one monolithic thing called the stock market. It's these hugely different areas of the market that are moving differently."

Investors have already felt the moves in recent weeks, when expectations for coming inflation and economic growth suddenly hit an upswing as COVID-19 vaccines rolled out and Congress neared its \$1.9 trillion economic rescue.

The Nasdaq composite tumbled more than 10% from February 12 through March 5, with its many tech

stock holdings hurt by the sudden rise in yields. The S&P 500 also fell over that span, down 2.4%, but more than half the stocks within the index were rising during that time.

Marathon Oil and other energy producers led the way, with several up more than 20%. Cruise-ship operators were also steaming much higher. If the economy does roar back soon, as nearly everyone on Wall Street is anticipating, profits should jump much more for those types of companies than for big tech stocks, which had actually benefited from the stay-at-home economy.

That's why if the S&P 500 falls because of drops for a just a few heavyweight companies, Wall Street should take it in stride. Many analysts and professional investors expect the improving economy to boost profits for companies enough to more than make up for any stumbles caused by rising rates in the near term, and they expect the S&P 500 to climb higher over the next year.

Since their recent tumble, tech stocks have come back as worries about inflation have been tamped down a bit. The revival for tech stocks helped the S&P 500 return to a record on Monday. □

Senate confirms Isabel Guzman to lead small biz agency

By **KEVIN FREKING**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved President Joe Biden's pick to oversee the Small Business Administration, an agency that has seen its portfolio expand in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The vote to confirm Isabel Guzman was 81-17. She is the 18th member of Biden's Cabinet to win Senate confirmation.

Guzman is a former Obama administration SBA official who currently heads California's Office of the Small Business Advocate. In that role, she oversaw efforts to help that state's small businesses survive the pandem-

ic.

"I am confident that I can hit the ground running," Guzman told senators in her confirmation hearing. The Small Business Administration oversees loan programs to help businesses recover from natural disasters, enhances access to capital through loan guarantees and provides training and technical assistance. Guzman said she would work to ensure money gets into the hands of the small businesses hurt the most by the pandemic and the economic crisis through no fault of their own.

"I have every confidence that under Ms. Guzman's leadership, the SBA will help

small business owners hold onto their dreams until our economy comes roaring back," said Senator Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Schumer noted that pandemic relief programs overseen by the Small Business Administration will dole out more than \$1 trillion to the nation's small businesses, nonprofits and religious institutions. The largest chunk of that funding will come through the Paycheck Protection Program, which provides low-interest loans that are full forgivable if 60% of the loan is spent on payroll and the balance on other qualified expenses. The Government Account-



An inner perimeter anti-scaling fence is around the U.S. Capitol, Tuesday, March 16, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

ability Office recently placed emergency small-business loans on its list of

programs considered highly vulnerable to fraud, waste or mismanagement. □

Ford partners with U-M on robotics research, new building

By COREY WILLIAMS

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) —

Digit marches on two legs across the floor of the University of Michigan's Ford Motor Co. Robotics Building, while Mini-Cheetah — staccato-like — does the same on four and the yellow-legged Cassie steps deliberately side-to-side.

A grand opening was held Tuesday for the four-story, \$75 million, 134,000-square-foot (11,429-square-meter) complex. Three floors house classrooms and research labs for robots that fly, walk, roll and augment the human body.

On the top floor are Ford researchers and engineers and the automaker's first robotics and mobility research lab on a university campus.

Together, they will work to develop robots and roboticists that help make lives better, keep people safer and build a more equitable



In a frame grab from video, robots walk across the floor of the University of Michigan's Ford Motor Co. Robotics Building, March 12, 2021 in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Associated Press

society, the school and automaker announced Tuesday.

"As we all drive and use our vehicles and go about our day-to-day lives, I'm sure all

of us have moments in our day where we could use a little help or a little assistance," said Ken Washington, Ford's chief technology officer.

"We are going to be working on drone technology, walking robots, roving robots, all types of robots in this facility and the ways in which they can make

people's lives better," Washington added. "And we'll do it in a way that addresses questions and fears around safety and security. The more people see how these robots can interact with society and interact with humans, the more comfortable they'll get with them."

The building on the university's Ann Arbor campus brings together researchers from 23 buildings and 10 programs into one space. Those working on two-legged disaster response robots can test them on a 30-mph (48-kph) treadmill studded with obstacles or on a stair-stepped "robot playground" designed with the help of artificial intelligence.

Biomedical engineers are looking at developing lighter, more stable prosthetic legs. Ford engineers are exploring how upright Digit robots can work in human spaces. □

Facebook to label vaccine posts to combat COVID-19 misinfo



This March 29, 2018 file photo shows the Facebook logo on screens at the Nasdaq MarketSite, in New York's Times Square.

Associated Press

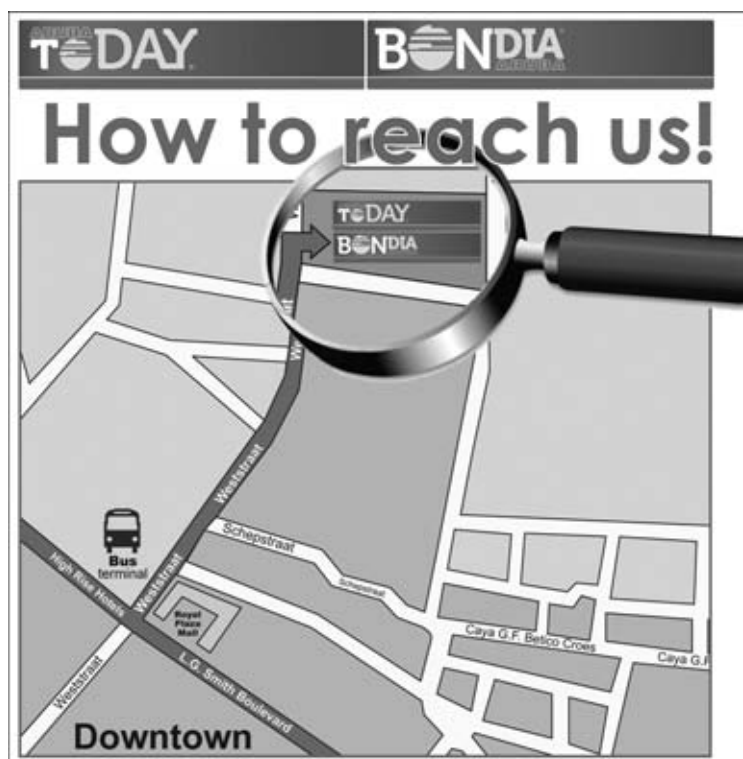
LONDON (AP) — Facebook is adding informational labels to posts about vaccines as it expands efforts to counter COVID-19-related misinformation flourishing on its platforms.

CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a blog post Monday that labels will contain "credible information" about the vaccines from the World Health Organization. They

will be in English and five other languages, with more languages added in coming weeks.

"For example, we're adding a label on posts that discuss the safety of COVID-19 vaccines that notes COVID-19 vaccines go through tests for safety and effectiveness before they're approved," Zuckerberg said. The social network is also

adding a tool to help get users vaccinated by connecting them to information about where and when they can get their shot. Facebook and Instagram have been criticized for allowing anti-vaccination propaganda to spread and for being woefully slow in weeding out the misinformation, often with fact-checks, labels and other restrained measures. "This announcement falls well short of what is needed to solve the crisis of anti-vaccine lies polluting social media users' timelines," said Imran Ahmed, CEO of the non-profit Center for Countering Digital Hate, a critic of social media companies' handling of hate speech and misinformation. "Facebook and Instagram still do not remove the vast majority of posts reported to them for containing dangerous misinformation about vaccines," her said "The main superspreaders of anti-vaccine lies all still have a presence on Instagram or Facebook, despite promises to remove them. □



Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

		9	5	7	2	1		
	7						2	
5				3				4
7				4				9
2	4			1	6	8		7
3								1
1								6
	5			2			1	
		3	1	5	4	7		

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Original 'SNL' player's memoir looks back in fondness, humor

By LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

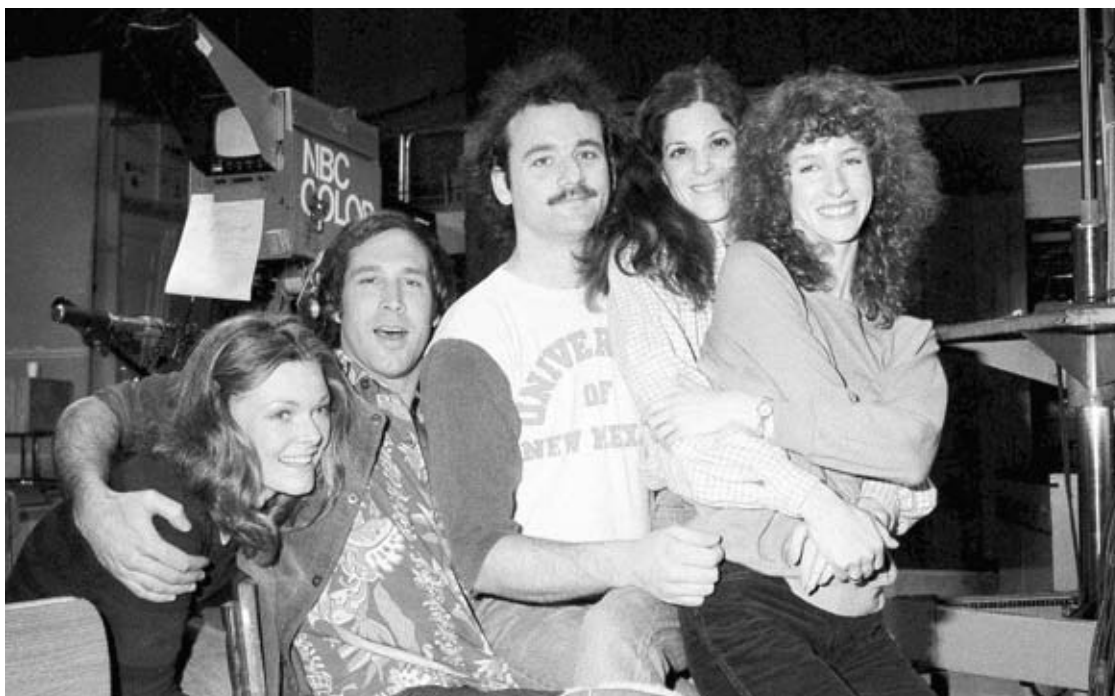
LOS ANGELES (AP) — If Laraine Newman recounted only her experiences as an original "Saturday Night Live" player a storied ensemble that included Gilda Radner and John Belushi she'd have plenty of memoir material.

But she has other adventures to share in "May You Live in Interesting Times," from the quirky she studied mime in Paris with Marcel Marceau to the questionable, including a teenage encounter with musician Johnny Winter.

Wherever Newman's newly released audiobook memoir takes us, it's got humor, heart and is unfailingly kind to others, even those whom she recalls were at times unkind to her. But she's candidly tough on herself, whether describing her drug addiction as a young woman or merely a brief, wretchedly embarrassing encounter with a music legend.

"The fact that I farted in front of Prince" should be motivation enough to listen to the book, Newman said, her lilting voice striking a wry note. "And that's just one of the wonderful moments in my life."

Newman, who turned 69 this month, is in a good place to look back. She's been sober for decades and is busy doing voice acting for a variety of projects, including "Despicable



Comedian Chevy Chase, second from left, joins the cast of NBC's "Saturday Night Live," with Laraine Newman, from right, Gilda Radner, Bill Murray and Jane Curtin on Feb. 16, 1978 in New York.

Associated Press

Me" films, "American Dad!" and "Doc McStuffins," along with occasional screen roles. She's proud of her children Hannah and Spike Einbinder, both working actors.

Revisiting the past, Newman said, allowed her to celebrate beloved "Saturday Night Live" sketches from her 1975-80 tenure and lift the curtain on their creation. In an interview with The Associated Press, she discussed her approach to the Audible Original book, the "SNL" track record with women and a Coneheads sketch highlight.

Remarks were edited for clarity and length.

AP: When writing the mem-

oir, which includes encounters with celebrities from Fred Astaire to Robert De Niro, did events seem even more remarkable in retrospect?

Newman: The book's gone through many reasons for its existence. But ultimately what I came to was the fact that, 'Hey, I was there for that.' 'Oh, I lived through that, I had a front row seat to that.' Even though it is very much my personal life, it's also the privilege of having a front-row seat at a lot of the pop culture movements in our country.

AP: What do you hope listeners take away from the memoir about you, about life lessons?

Newman: I'm the last person to impart any kind of life lesson. But the one thing that I really wanted to do, because I've never seen this in biographies before, is to really lean into the fact that I experienced a lot of failure. I think that people wrap their biographies up in a pink bow, and it's important to acknowledge that you can live with a lot of failure. You've just got to keep going.

AP: Your favorite moment on 'Saturday Night Live'?
Newman: There are so many of them, but the one that immediately comes to mind is about food. We were doing the Coneheads and there was a part where

we eat fiberglass insulation and it was made out of rice paper and cotton candy. I was thinking, 'This is a great job.' But there's so many moments, just pee-in-your-pants stuff.

AP: 'SNL' was long criticized for failing to showcase women and include people of color in the cast. What's your perspective on that?

Newman: With regard to our shows, we had 13 writers three women, 10 men and it was a meritocracy. No matter what people say. Lorne (Michaels, the show's creator) was very egalitarian with what went on the show. It was what was funny. It doesn't matter who wrote it, who was in it. But the sensibility that the show gained with Tina Fey as the head writer.... It became more female-centric probably because they had a lot more female writers.

AP: You said you had to learn to be a voice actor. Have you found unexpected satisfactions in the work?

Newman: There's a thing where you'll be in the (recording) booth and on the other side of the glass, you see the people in the control room, and it's the writers and the director. And when you do a take and you see everybody in unison, their heads snap back and their mouths open and they're laughing, it's so rewarding. □



Filmmaker Spike Lee poses for a portrait in Beverly Hills, Calif. on Oct. 7, 2015.

Associated Press

Spike Lee to head Cannes Film Festival jury

By JAKE COYLE

NEW YORK (AP) — Spike Lee, who was set to lead last year's jury for the Cannes Film Festival that was ultimately canceled by the pandemic, will preside over this year's jury instead.

The French Riviera festival on Tuesday announced that Lee will be president of the jury for the 74th Cannes. Usually held in May, this year's Cannes Film Festival has been de-

layed by the health crisis. It's set to take place July 6-17.

Lee is the first Black person to head the Cannes jury, which selects one of cinema's top prizes, the Palme d'Or.

Pierre Lescure, president of the festival, praised Lee for his loyalty and spirit.

"Throughout the months of uncertainty we've just been through, Spike Lee has never stopped encouraging us," said Lescure in

a statement. "This support is finally coming to fruition and we could not have hoped for a more powerful personality to chart our troubled times." □

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6	8	3	1	5	4	7	9	2

Difficulty Level ★★★

3/17

Spend, spend, spend on 2nd day of "legal tampering" in NFL

By **BARRY WILNER**
AP Pro Football Writer

For people wondering where is all the free-agent quarterback movement as the NFL's "legal tampering" period enters its second day, well, calm down. The busy spenders at the position thus far have been two teams keeping their supposed guy, Cam Newton in New England and Jameis Winston in New Orleans.

Of course, trades that can be completed when the NFL's business year begins Wednesday will see Carson Wentz with the Colts, Matthew Stafford heading to the Rams in exchange for Jared Goff, who goes to the Lions.

Observers wondering about the possible trade destination of Deshaun Watson, Teddy Bridgewater or Sam Darnold, or landing spots for Mitchell Trubisky and Jacoby Brissett just have to wait.

At least Washington stepped into that breach by agreeing to terms with the very well-traveled Ryan Fitzpatrick. The 38-year-old "FitzMagic" joins his ninth franchise (Rams, Bengals, Bills, Titans, Texans, Jets, Buccaneers and Dolphins). He started seven and played in nine games last season for Miami, throwing for 2,091 yards, 13 touchdowns and eight interceptions.

Incredibly, Fitzpatrick never has been on a playoff team in his 16 pro seasons. With 2020 NFL Comeback Player of the Year Alex Smith released by Washington — no, Smith has not landed anywhere yet, either — Fitzpatrick will compete with Taylor Heinicke and Kyle Allen for the starting spot on a team that won the weak NFC East at 7-9.

A guy who not only has been to the postseason but has a Super Bowl ring, Von Miller, is remaining with the Broncos.

The Denver Broncos have exercised star linebacker Von Miller's 2021 option, which engages the final

season of the six-year, \$114.5 million contract and guarantees him \$7 million of his \$17.5 million base salary.

Miller has recovered from a freak ankle injury that sidelined him all of last season. Cincinnati grabbed one of the top pass-rush threats available in free agency,

Trey Hendrickson. The former Saints defensive end gets \$60 million over four years, with \$32 million paid in the first two seasons, according to a person with knowledge of the contract. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no terms have been made public. □



Denver Broncos outside linebacker Von Miller takes up his position during the first half of an NFL football game against the Green Bay Packers in Green Bay, Wisc., in this Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019, file photo.

Associated Press



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Analysis: Even the NBA trade deadline has a different feel

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

If these were normal times, the Toronto Raptors would probably be on the cusp of trading Kyle Lowry to a contender right about now. They're 11th in the Eastern Conference, losers of five straight games, Lowry is a championship point guard who would make any team better and his contract is expiring.

Thing is, these are not normal times.

The Raptors have shown no desire to move Lowry, in part because they still very much remain in the playoff mix and soon they'll get five players back after missing time for virus-related reasons. Pretty much every team, apologies to maybe Detroit and Minnesota, are also realistically in the postseason mix. Such is a byproduct of the new play-in round meaning that 10 teams from each conference will have games after the regular season ends this year, instead of the usual eight.

That means even the trade deadline might have a different feel this year — keeping with the theme of just about everything else in the league also changing this season, with a shorter schedule, barely any fans at games, testing multiple times a day and tons of rules designed to keep ev-



Toronto Raptors guard Kyle Lowry, right, shoots against Chicago Bulls forward Thaddeus Young during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Chicago, Sunday, March 14, 2021.

Associated Press

everyone safe.

This year, there will be buyers. What's unclear is how many teams will be willing sellers by March 25.

"The greatest day of the year," Lowry said.

He says that's because March 25 happens to be his birthday, not because it happens to be the trade deadline.

It's already an unusual season, in that significant names were put onto the market openly and long before the deadline. Blake Griffin and Detroit worked out a buyout, allowing him to join the Brooklyn Nets. DeMarcus Cousins was let

go by Houston and became a free agent. P.J. Tucker's time with the Rockets appears to be over, LaMarcus Aldridge and San Antonio are parting ways and Cleveland has been trying to find a new home for Andre Drummond for weeks.

Eventually, there will be takers. And as the trade deadline looms just about a week away, expect chatter to pick up considerably. The defending champion Los Angeles Lakers might want a big man to provide some insurance just in case Anthony Davis doesn't return at 100%. The Los An-

geles Clippers have been shopping for a point guard and a wing pretty much all season. Brooklyn isn't believed to be done tinkering with its lineup yet. Boston needs a big man. Miami could use more size. Same goes for Philadelphia, especially if Joel Embiid is going to be out for more than just a few games.

They'll all try to make deals. Every general manager in the league is trying to make deals; that's what they do. The challenge this year will be to find willing participants, especially if the team on the other end of the phone still considers it-

self in the playoff race or at least the race for a play-in tournament spot.

"I also think there are more factors this year because of the condensed schedule," Orlando coach Steve Clifford said. "I mean, if you hit it right — we haven't yet — but if you hit it right, regardless of what your schedule looks like ... you have a chance."

The Magic are freefalling. They've lost eight in a row, are next-to-last in the East at 13-26 — yet are just five games out of that 10th spot and a berth in the play-in round. Again, in normal times, they would be probably unloading some of their key players right now; Nikola Vucevic, Aaron Gordon, Evan Fournier and Terrence Ross would all generate interest from a lot of clubs. In a coronavirus-dominated season, odds are that teams will go through what Toronto is going through now with five players sidelined for positive tests or contact tracing. If a team or two ahead of Orlando gets into one of those predicaments, the standings could change quickly. And that condensed schedule, jam-packed to the point that teams can barely even practice anymore, is something else to consider as far as having potential to make little issues turn into big problems. □

Tiger Woods returns to video games, this time with 2K series



In this Oct. 28, 2019, file photo, Tiger Woods smiles during the winner's ceremony after winning the Zozo Championship PGA Tour at the Accordia Golf Narashino country club in Inzai, east of Tokyo, Japan.

Associated Press

Tiger Woods is back in the game — digitally, at least. Woods has signed a long-term partnership with the company behind the "PGA Tour 2K" video game series, returning the 15-time major champion to an industry he once dominated with EA Sports.

The deal was announced Tuesday, nearly a month after Woods suffered career-threatening leg injuries when he crashed an SUV on a steep road in the Los Angeles suburbs.

It's possible Woods may never return to the PGA Tour, where his 82 victories are tied with Sam Snead for most all-time, but his

name and likeness will be used exclusively in the "PGA Tour 2K" franchise. Woods was not among the players included in last year's 2K game, and it's unclear if he'll be added or if his name or image will be used on the cover. A news release from 2K said only that Woods would be an executive director and consultant.

Woods was partnered with EA Sports for 15 years, and the "Tiger Woods PGA Tour" series is among the most successful sports video games ever. Woods and EA Sports parted in 2013, four years after news of Woods' extramarital affairs

tarnished his public image. EA Sports rebuilt the game from scratch and put Rory McIlroy on the cover in 2015, but the reboot got subpar reviews. EA Sports hasn't produced a golf game since.

"I am looking forward to making my return to the video game landscape, and with 2K and HB Studios, I've found the right partners to make it happen," Woods said in a statement released by 2K. "I'm honored to take part in this opportunity and look forward to sharing my expertise and insights as we build the future of golf video games together." □